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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AFGHANISTAN, CLIMATE, MIDEAST, GUANTANAMO,

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¶1. Lead Stories Summary

ZDF-TV's primetime newscast Heute opened with a story on the recall of 100,000 credit cards after allegations of data fraud; ARD-TV's primetime newscast Tagesschau opened with a story on the coalition government's retreat at Meseberg Castle. Newspapers led with diverse

economic and political stories, ranging from the opposition against

the school reform in the state of Hamburg (FAZ) to the increase of electricity costs (Sueddeutsche). Die Welt carried a front page photo

of President Obama walking on top of the Great Wall of China.

Editorials focused on the government's retreat at Meseberg, the Mideast conflict and other topics.

¶2. (Afghanistan) Karzai's Inauguration

Electronic media led this morning with reports saying that President Karzai was inaugurated for a second term as Afghan president in front of hundreds of guests, including Secretary Clinton and German Foreign Minister Westerwelle. "In his inauguration speech, Karzai held out

the prospect that Afghanistan could take over the responsibility for the country's security in five years time. He promised to fight corruption," ZDF-TV's Heute newscast reports.

The ZDF-TV's correspondent Uli Gack said in Kabul (11/19): "Kabul is a ghost city right now. The entire government center is cordoned off by nervous soldiers. During the swearing-in ceremony, there were many

Western leaders but also old familiar faces of warlords whom we would rather put in front of a war tribunal and not in such a ceremony. Karzai has not said much new, but reiterated old policies. His speech was once interrupted by applause when he spoke of increasing the fight against corruption.... Action must now follow his words. Western foreign ministers met this morning. They want to see Karzai take action."

Sueddeutsche (11/19) briefly reported under the headline "Clinton in Afghanistan" that "prior to the inauguration of President Karzai, U.S. Secretary of State Clinton arrived in Kabul for her first visit... In fear of attacks, security measures were increased." Spiegel Online

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led with the headline "Surprise Visit in Afghanistan-Foreign Minister Westerwelle urges Karzai to launch reforms." The webzine adds that Westerwelle faces a "tricky mission: he must connect congratulations with tough demands."

13. (Environment) Copenhagen Summit

Several papers (11/19) carried factual news reports according to which the EU adopted new rules for the construction of houses and that Russia wants to meet EU climate protection goals. Financial Times Deutschland reported that "the EU has now stipulated new energy standards for homeowners. As of 2020, privately-built new houses must use as little energy as possible. The remaining consumption of energy must be generated from solar energy and biomass. For public buildings, these rules take effect at the end of 2018. With these new rules, the EU is imposing tough standards for its ambitious climate protection goals. Shortly before the Copenhagen summit, the Europeans are sending a political signal."

Sueddeutsche (11/19) headlined: "Russia Wants to Adopt EU Climate Protection Goals," and wrote: "Russia wants to commit itself to accepting ambitious climate protection goals, thus giving the sluggish talks on a new international climate protection agreement a new impetus. According to sources at the EU-Russia summit negotiations,

Moscow is examining whether to adopt European climate protection goals. With an ambitious Russian commitment, pressure on the other

big polluters in the United States (globally the second biggest emitter of carbon dioxide emissions) and China (the biggest polluter) will increase. Both countries have thus far not accepted any commitment. At the margins of the special EU summit, Chancellor Merkel again wants to get support for her view that the European

envoys enter the Copenhagen talks with ambitious goals. She said in Berlin: "As Europeans we should not give in. Copenhagen must become a success.'" Tagesspiegel (11/19) headlined: "Tired New Beginning," and reported that "Russian President Medvedev avoided mentioning concrete targets and percentage points and left it open to what extent the Russian promise would be binding. Medvedev added that Russia and the EU must now convince others of the need for quick action until the beginning of the Copenhagen conference."

Financial Times Deutschland (11/19) headlined: "Russia is Fooling The EU with a Climate Stunt," and reported: "With its new climate goals, Russia caused euphoria in the EU. Following the EU-Russia summit in Stockholm, European Commission President Barroso said: 'This was a successful day for our climate talks with Russia.' But it is questionable whether the new Russian CO2 reduction goals really mean that Russia must change its policies. Stephan Singer, head of the

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global climate protection policy of the WWF environmental organization, told FTD: 'This 20-percent target is a laughing stock. It would mean that Russia would be allowed to emit even more [CO2].' He added that Russia has enormous possibilities to reduce emissions. The energy intensity per dollar of its economic output is still considerably higher in Russia than in China or the United States, he said.

Frankfurter Rundschau (10/19) observed: "Russia as a protector of the climate. Thus far we have thought those two words would not fit together. But all of a sudden, Moscow is creating new excitement for the Copenhagen global climate summit. President Medvedev's announced that he wants to support the EU emission targets by 2020, thus putting pressure on Washington and Beijing. And this is good. It is easy for Russia to achieve its climate goals because the collapse of the Soviet industry still has a favorable effect on its carbon dioxide emissions budget. Nevertheless, this signal should not be underestimated. Russia could now sell unused carbon dioxide rights to other nations.

Maybe Russia has realized how important climate protection is. This would be a sensation."

Under the headline: "Tightrope Act," weekly Die Zeit (11/19) editorialized: "On the margins of the APEC summit, which includes the greatest climate sinners of all nations such as the United States, China, Russia, and Japan, there was an official announcement that there will be no climate protection agreement for the time being. It would now be possible to identify those who must be blamed for the failure of the Copenhagen summit, but it would be to no avail. Obviously, the world is not yet ready to protect the climate. Instead of trying to wrap up bad climate protection in nice words in Copenhagen, it is, according to the current situation better, to keep talking - provided the Copenhagen Declaration establishes the right

framework conditions. First, it must agree on global targets; second, the declaration must make clear who is to shoulder which burden; and third, the Copenhagen Declaration should leave no doubt that climate sinners have to pay. Climate policy has already produced enough hot air. In Copenhagen, politicians must be honest and finally approve concrete goals."

14. (Mideast) Israeli Settlements

Sddeutsche (11/19) editorialized: "The building plans for Gilo face serious opposition. They seem to lead to a power struggle between Prime Minister Netanyahu's government and President Obama, which is

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long overdue. The harsh criticism from Washington shows how much this project provokes Washington. Only last week was Netanyahu in the White House and everything suggested that Obama urged the prime minister to cooperate and warned him against going it alone. It did not help much. Israeli bulldozers are the last thing Obama needs to pave the way for new peace talks with the Palestinians.... However, the U.S. government must blame itself for the deadlocked U.S. diplomacy on the Mideast. In recent weeks, Secretary Clinton suggested to Netanyahu that Washington is no longer so serious about an immediate settlement freeze. This zigzag course has caused much damage. The Palestinians feel discouraged and betrayed. The Israelis feel encouraged to sit out demands from the White House. If Obama does not want others to make a fool out of him, he must exert pressure in the question of Gilo. He would be backed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Europeans. This would not be a bad starting point. However, the U.S. President must prepare himself for a tough fight."

Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/19) opined: "It is indeed whitewash to claim that the extension of already existing settlements is not an expansion of the settlement activities.... Particularly in eastern Jerusalem, the demographic changes are significant. Washington as well as Ban Ki-moon fear that a two-state solution would no longer be possible if this goes on. The efforts for new peace talks would also be impeded."

Under the headline "Dangerous provocation in Mideast," Handelsblatt (11/19) argued: "Israel remains unimpressed and advances settlement construction in the West Bank. Peace in the Middle East will be even further away if the U.S. does not vigorously interfere.... After his sobering trip to Asia, the President will now have to take care of the Mideast. If he fails to get the parties at one table again, the U.S. is threatened with an enormous loss of reputation abroad. The impression that Obama is just bluffing in his approach to Israel would

solidify. Given the complexity of the problems in Afghanistan Iraq, the Mideast and China, Washington is obviously reaching the limits of its political capability."

15. (U.S.) Closure of Guantnamo

Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/19) headlined: "Obama admits delay" and Sddeutsche headlined on its front-page: "Guantanamo will remain for the time being - U.S. President cannot close camp as promised."

Sddeutsche (11/19) editorialized: "The admission was inevitable. Obama had to admit that he could not keep his promise to close the

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shameful camp of Guantanamo by January 20, 2010, the anniversary of his inauguration. The announcement made in the euphoria of the inauguration, which sounded naive and wrong at the time, has now been cancelled. It was wrong because it seemed to be clear a year ago that it would be difficult to close and guarantee the inmates a lawful procedure. Still today it is not clear what to do with some 100 detainees who are apparently so dangerous that one cannot release them. However, there is also not sufficient evidence against them to take them to court. And the announcement was naive because Obama believed he only had to create enough public pressure to reach his goals. This was the way to win the election, but leading a government works differently. The President has greatly underestimated political opposition and the persistence of the apparatus. However, Obama is a long-term strategist and believes in small steps.... He will close Guantanamo in the end, but not by January 20, 2010."

16. (Iran) Nuclear Conflict

Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/19) editorialized: "U.S. President Obama claims he is not disappointed that the detention camp in Guantanamo would not be closed by January next year as announced. It would be interesting to know whether he is also not disappointed about Iran's rejection of the compromise proposal to send abroad its uranium for enrichment. It is clear that the hand Obama reached out has not been taken by the Tehran leadership even after months. The agreements made in Geneva disappeared into thin air. Iran does not even think about making a move towards detente - not as long as it can expect Russia and particularly China to act in Tehran's interest concerning sanctions. The Iranian leadership knows how to gamble for time. Western powers should have understood this by now. One day the game will be over. The question is: who will win?"

17. (U.S.-Asia) Future Relations

Under the headline: "The Bride is Hesitating," Die Welt (11/19) argued: "While Europe again does not seem to take advantage of its possibilities when it comes to selecting the candidates for its top jobs and continues to suffer from the illusion that the model of a transatlantic expert governs in the White House, the United States is

turning to Asia. Europe has never looked as old as during President Obama's trip to Asia. And that is why his absence at the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Wall was only consistent. Those who want to win the future, prefer to travel to Asia rather than to Europe. And unlike what many Europeans think, Obama is not an idealist but a pragmatic realist in foreign policy. He seeks those as partners with whom he thinks he can solve problems the best. And

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this is increasingly China, not Europe. This week, the world has got a pretaste of how the future global directorate made up of the U.S. and China might look. If the G-20 format is too complicated to find a solution, the two big colossi of global politics will meet for an informal G-2. The only problem for Obama is that the Asian bride is still coy. The Americans are increasingly realizing that Europe lacks global policy ambitions and determination in order to share global leadership tasks in cooperation with the U.S. At the same time, China is still a power that is becoming more influential and is still taking out loans on the future. Obama offered the Chinese a strategic partnership, but they do not want to accept it. For Europe this means it is not yet too late to present itself as a natural partner in leadership for the U.S. With respect to his biography, Obama is really the first Pacific U.S. president. That is why Europe must offer more than a nostalgic transfiguration of the transatlantic past."

18. (EU) Top Jobs

Under the headline: "European Province," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (11/19) editorialized: "The miserable wrestling over EU top positions is a mockery towards the EU's claim to be taken seriously in the world. Only political dreamers consider the back and forth about the EU's top positions as evidence of democratic maturity. In reality this discord is evidence of the unwillingness of EU members to look beyond the horizon of their national and partisan interests. Today's EU summit will fail if it does not do away with one shortcoming: first, the future task of the people in these top jobs must be studied and then they must examine who could best meet all the requirements, irrespective of his/her origin, gender and partisan orientation. This is the only way out of the confusion."

In a front-page editorial Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/19) judged: "If next year, for instance, the G-20 leaders convene, the EU delegation, in addition to the national delegations, will be even bigger than today, with even more actors... The increase in Europe's representation abroad could create confusion and add fuel to the complaint that the Europeans appear with too many people in international bodies. It is not without its irony that America, China, Brazil, and others are calling upon the Europeans to concentrate their forces, but they in turn create even more positions. The situation is not getting better. The intention to streamline positions leads to an extension. Can the

EU leadership be optimized? Maybe. Since this position has now been created, the first president of the European Council must be ready to lead and the member states must support him in their own national

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interests."

"European Dream Team," is the headline of an editorial in Financial Times Deutschland (11/19), which noted: "The EU leaders can appoint whomever they like tonight at their summit meeting, but if Merkel and her colleagues do not show the courage and the will to really handover the representation of European interests in decisive moments to their representative, the EU will continue to lose power and influence."

Weekly Die Zeit (11/19) sub-headlined: "Europe can Remain a Factor of Power in Global Politics only if it Speaks with one Voice." The paper opined: "As of next year, the Europeans can send their president to international conferences, or their foreign minister.... It would be the first time that he would be able to speak for the 500 million Europeans. For this reason alone, this Thursday is a good day for the European Union. But to speak with one voice does not mean to speak with the one voice of the European Council president or the foreign minister. Both can achieve little on their own; only if the 27 EU leaders support them, will Europe speak as a continent with 500 million people. Only then will Europe be heard. No continent is more innovative, more social, and fairer - and up until today more prosperous. Nowhere in the world are living conditions better than here. With its soft power, Europe must seek its splendor not only in the past. On the contrary, it can be a model for the world."

¶9. (Economic) WTO

According to an editorial in Sueddeutsche Zeitung (11/19), "The European Commission has now declared its willingness to soften the restrictions for the import of bananas, mangos, and other tropical fruit. It is good news in many respects that these nonsensical EU subsidies will soon be terminated. The banana agreement will primarily cause confidence in Geneva because the WTO envoys, who have their seat there, have been trying for years to conclude a global free trade agreement. Thus far, the Doha talks have dragged along without producing any results. But if now Americans, Europeans, and Africans bury the longest lasting dispute in the WTO's history, they will also make a great step forward to successfully conclude the WTO talks."

MURPHY